

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KABUL 06661 171211Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-08 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 COME-00 FRB-03 TRSE-00  
XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-01 /114 W  
-----118855 181131Z /10

R 170630Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9602  
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 6661

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PINS, EAGR, ECON, EFIN, AF  
SUBJ: GOVERNOR OF KABUL PROVINCE DISCUSSES DECREE SIX AND THE  
CURFEW

REF: A) KABUL 6418, B) KABUL A-68

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNOR OF KABUL, HIS MOST  
TIME-CONSUMING RESPONSIBILITY IS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECREE  
NO. 6, WHICH IS DESIGNED TO REDUCE THE MORTGAGE BURDEN OF  
FARMERS (REF B). HE ALSO REPORTED THAT THE CURFEW HAS BEEN  
SUSPENDED FOR THE FASTING MONTH OF RAMAZAN. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCOMPANIED BY THE DCM AND THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR, I  
PAID MY INITIAL COURTESY CALL ON DR. BISMULLAH SUHAK,  
GOVERNOR OF KABUL PROVINCE, ON AUGUST 12. SUHAK, A TALL, HUSKY,  
HANDSOME PUSHTUN, WITH HEAVY BLACK EYEBROWS AND A SLIGHT LISP,  
RECEIVED US WITH FRIENDLY COURTESY. BECAUSE THE GOVERNOR KNOWS  
LITTLE ENGLISH, THE CONVERSATION WAS CONDUCTED THROUGH AN  
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PAGE 02 KABUL 06661 171211Z

INTERPRETER. SUHAK WAS FACTUAL IN HIS PRESENTATION, AND DID NOT  
ENGAGE IN IDEOLOGICAL POLEMICS.

3. DECREE NO. 6. SUHAK STATED THAT HIS MOST TIME-CONSUMING  
RESPONSIBILITY CURRENTLY IS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL'S RECENT DECREE NO. 6, WHICH ESTABLISHED  
A SYSTEM FOR THE ELIMINATION OR REDUCTION OF THE MORTGAGE BURDENS

OF FARMERS. HE EXPLAINED THE TERMS OF THE DECREE (SEE REF B), AND CLAIMED THAT THE DEBT RETIREMENT SCHEDULE HAD BEEN CAREFULLY DEVELOPED FOR FAIRNESS TO BOTH PARTIES, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE USURIOUS INTEREST CHARGES WHICH PROBABLY HAD BEEN PAID BY EACH CUTOFF STAGE. WHILE ON THE TOPIC OF INTEREST, THE GOVERNOR OBSERVED THAT USURY IS NOT PERMITTED UNDER THE ISLAMIC "SHARIAT" LAW; THEREFORE, THE MORTGAGE OF RECORD ORDINARILY COVERS ONLY THE PRINCIPAL OWED, AND A SEPARATE, SECRET SIDE-AGREEMENT BINDS THE DEBTOR TO MEET AN INTEREST PAYMENT SCHEDULE. THE GOVERNOR HAS HEARD THAT MORHUAGORS AND MORTGAGEES HAVE BEEN MEETING SECRETLY TO REAFFIRM THEIR COMPLETE DEBT AGREEMENTS BECAUSE THE DEBTORS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO COMPREHEND THE BOON BEING OFFERED THEM BY DECREE NO. 6 AND ARE MINDFUL OF THEIR CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOCAL MONEYLENDER. THE UNEARTHING OF THESE "ILLEGAL" PROCEDURES HAS RESULTED IN MUCH WORK FOR HIS OFFICE. NOW THAT SPECIAL DISTRICT COMMITTEES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED TO ADMINISTER DECREE NO. 6, HOWEVER, SUHAK HAS NOTED THAT THE PROBLEM IS BEING MANAGED BETTER. COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN EACH RURAL COMMUNITY ARE FERRETING OUT SECRET MORTGAGE AGREEMENTS AND CONVINCING THE DEBTORS THAT THEY SHOULD APPLY FOR RELIEF UNDER DECREE NO. 6. (COMMENT: THE GOVERNOR DID NOT EXPLAIN WHERE THE FARMER WILL LOOK NEXT CROP SEASON FOR A LOAN FOR FERTILIZER AND SEEDS. NOTE REF A. END OF COMMENT.)

4. NIGHTTIME CURFEW. GOVERNOR SUHAK AFFIRMED THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT ENFORCING THE 11:00 P.M. CURFEW DURING THE CURRENT MUSLIM CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KABUL 06661 171211Z

LUNAR FASTING MONTH OF RAMAZAN, BUT WARNED THAT MOTORISTS APPROACHING "SENSITIVE AREAS" AFTER NIGHTFALL CAN EXPECT TO BE STOPPED AT MILITARY CHECKPOINTS FOR AN IDENTITY CHECK AND A VETTING OF THE DRIVER'S TRAVEL PLANS. THE GOVERNOR THOUGHT IT LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT A REGULAR CURFEW MIGHT BE REIMPOSED AFTER THE END OF RAMAZAN (AROUND THE FIFTH OF SEPTEMBER).

5. LAW-AND-ORDER IN KABUL PROVINCE. AMONG THE GOVERNOR'S CHIEF RESPONSIBILITIES IS THE SECURITY OF THE PROVINCE. HE CLAIMED THAT THE CRIME RATE IN HIS REGION HAS FALLEN SINCE THE REVOLUTION. SUHAK TOLD US THAT HE DRIVES THROUGH THE STREETS OF KABUL "THREE OR FOUR TIMES EVERY NIGHT" IN ORDER TO CHECK PERSONALLY THE SECURITY SITUATION. HE PAYS PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO EMBASSIES, LIKE OUR OWN, REMINDING THE POLICE GUARDS TO BE ALERT.

5. BIOGRAPHIC NOTES: SUHAK APPEARS TO BE IN HIS EARLY THIRTIES. HE WAS GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF KABUL WITH A HISTORY DEGREE. FOR A SHORT TIME THEREAFTER, HE WORKED FOR KABUL UNIVERSITY IN AN ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY. ALTHOUGH SUHAK HAD WANTED TO GO TO THE U.S. OR BRITAIN FOR GRADUATE STUDIES, HIS SUPERIORS AT THAT TIME HAD DECIDED THAT HE WAS NOT QUALIFIED FOR THE ANGLO-

SAXON EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND SENT HIM INSTEAD TO UNIVERSITY  
IN VORONEZH IN THE USSR WHERE HE EARNED A PHD IN HISTORY AFTER  
SIX YEARS OF STUDY. HIS COMMAND OF RUSSIAN IS GOOD. SUHAK TOLD  
US THAT HE WAS OBSERVING THE MUSLIM FAST OF RAMAZAN, WHICH,  
IF TRUE, MAY INDICATE THAT HE IS A TRUE BELIEVER.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** GOVERNMENT REFORM, PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, CURFEW  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 17 aug 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978KABUL06661  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780338-0097  
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**Image Path:**  
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**Litigation Code IDs:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 78 KABUL 6418, 78 KABUL A-68  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 20 jun 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1712881  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** GOVERNOR OF KABUL PROVINCE DISCUSSES DECREE SIX AND THE CURFEW  
**TAGS:** PINT, PGOV, PINS, EAGR, ECON, EFIN, (SUHAK, BISMULLAH)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/94b0fc61-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014